

**Commission on the Improvement of the Status of Children in Indiana**  
**Education Outcomes Task Force Meeting**  
**March 6, 2015**  
**10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon**  
**Indiana Government Center South Building Conference Room 17**

**Minutes**

**Task Force Members in attendance:** Sean Coleman, J.T. Coopman, Leslie Crist, Cathy Danyluk, Leslie Dunn, Laurie Elliott, Melaina Gant, Reba James, Susan Lockwood, Marg Mast, Theresa Ochoa, Lenee Reedus, Anita Silverman, Kellie Whitcomb

**Visitor in Attendance:** Sarah Swank, Indiana University

**Task Members approved the minutes from the November 7, 2014 meeting and the January 9, 2015 meeting.**

Susan Lockwood asked the task force members to reflect upon the presentations and information that had been gathered to date, and whether or not the task force was ready to make recommendations to the Commission. Regarding this, the following was noted:

1. Many of the transition programs were valuable, and needed to be “marketed” so more people would know about them. Cathy Danyluk suggested that the Task Force utilize IDOE’s web-site, “School Climate and Culture Awareness”, soon to be made available to the public, to link the Task Force’s “vetted” resources.
2. There is still an issue with making it easier for schools and students to make the transition time from a placement to a school at the end of a traditional school year meaningful and relevant for the student. It was suggested that schools leverage technology to enroll students in credit recovery courses.
3. Schools need formal strategies for reducing the number of students who are suspended and expelled. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) was mentioned as a program having proven outcomes for keeping students engaged in school.
4. It was mentioned that those youth transitioning from placements need to have structure to their time outside of school. Youth report that they have difficulty finding employment. New legislation and guidelines for the Department of Workforce Development identifies funding to assist young at-risk adults (up to the age of 24) with finding employment. This funding is particularly targeted to those individuals who are defined as “out of school”. DWD is currently working with staff from the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, among others, to identify the population needing these supports.
5. The model represented by “The Crossings”, in which another entity could work with school corporations to educate at-risk/troubled students was discussed. Specifically, the element of “Family Time/Circle Time” (peer sharing), was mentioned as “informal mental health therapy”.
6. The connection between mental health and education needs to be emphasized. Research showing that those who are not cognitively prepared to learn cannot learn. Family trauma, including divorce, can cause children/youth to struggle in school.
7. There is a need for more school counselors and school social workers, and the roles of the school counselors and school social workers need to be clearly delineated.

8. There is a need to education youth, parents, guardians, and employers regarding whether or not a youth has to disclose a criminal background (juvenile record) when applying for a job.
9. There were questions regarding the laws surrounding expunging juvenile records. Task Force members requested that we have someone make a presentation to explain this. Additionally, there is a general increased interest among juvenile judges to expunge juvenile records. Task Force members inquired about what could be done to raise this as an issue to the Commission.
10. There continues to be difficulty tracking down school records, including special education IEPs (Individual Education Plans) when a student transfers among various schools and placements.
11. There is a need for a training path for public school administrators and school resource officers to effectively manage students with a mental health diagnoses. It was mentioned that NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) provides Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to help with this.

The Task Force observed a presentation from Dr. Theresa Ochoa (Indiana University) and Ms. Sarah Swank (Indiana University) on the I-HOPE pilot project at Madison Juvenile Correctional Facility. I-HOPE (Helping Offenders Prosper in Employment) assigns undergraduate mentors to youth who are transitioning to their communities and looking for employment. The mentors assist the youth with getting a job and keeping a job. The I-HOPE program uses existing, established resources to help the youth. For example, the mentors work with the facility's school Transition Coordinator to help the youth connect with appropriate youth resources available to them through the Department of Workforce Development. A grant proposal has been submitted to get funding for youth to use tablets to communicate with their mentor upon release.

The Task Force reviewed an assignment related to the OJJDP Comprehensive Reentry Planning Project. Task Force members were asked to review the 29 questions and respond to those which they felt they could address. They were asked to send/scan their responses to Susan Lockwood by March 15 so the responses could be compiled and used to develop the Comprehensive Reentry Strategic Plan.

The Commission objectives, relevant to the Education Outcomes Task Force, were reviewed by the group. The Task Force decided to focus on the following:

1. Address quality/consistency of education in detention
2. Increase school stability and decrease absenteeism
3. Increase mental health services in schools, including focus on early identification and intervention
4. Increase coordination regarding education among DOE, DCS, Probation and school districts
5. Improve transitions for youth from DOC and DCS to other agencies (BDDS, mental health) and to community including reentry to school

Kellie Whitcomb, Laurie Elliott, Sean Coleman, and Lenae Reedus will continue to work on addressing the quality/consistency of education in detention, and will report to the Task Force at the next meeting.

At the next meeting, Melaina Gant will report to the task force about existing absenteeism and truancy strategies being used in Allen and Lake Counties.

At the next meeting, Anita Silverman will report to the group about best practices relevant to mental health/education.

Susan Lockwood will continue to involve the Task Force with developing the Comprehensive Reentry Strategic Plan through the OJJDP grant project.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.